

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 DHA-02 HEW-02 DODE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05

ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EUR-12 AID-05 FDRE-00 /059 W

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O P 121544Z FEB 76

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8116

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF EAID LE

SUBJECT: ICRC APPEAL FOR US ASSISTANCE IN LEBANON

REF: 1) STATE 028786, 2) BEIRUT 1242

1. MISOFF MET WITH ICRC DELEGATE FOR NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST CONVERS IN RESPONSE REFTEL TO DISCUSS ICRC SITUATION AND PLANS IN LEBANON. FOLLOWING WERE SALIENT POINTS EMERGING FROM LENGTHY PRESENTATION:

2. CONVERS REVIEWED HISTORY OF ICRC PRESENCE IN LEBANON SINCE 1967, WHICH INITIATED PRIMARILY AS RESULT OF ARAB/ ISRAELI CONFLICT AND PROVIDED, INTER ALIA, FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF WAREHOUSE IN BEIRUT OF STOCK SUPPLIES FOR EMERGENCY PURPOSES. BASIC ICRC ORIENTATION CHANGED IN OCTOBER WHEN CIVIL CONFLICT ASSUMED SERIOUS PROPORTIONS, WHEREUPON ICRC ISSUED APPEAL FOR \$2 MILLION FOR RELIEF TO LEBANESE. WITH DISAPPOINTING RESPONSE TO APPEAL, ICRC FORCED TO CHANGE PLANS AND CURTAIL ACTIVITIES TO PROVISION OF MEDICAMENTS TO BOTH SIDES AND ALL HOSPITALS, WHENEVER SLCAK PERIOD IN FIGHTING MADE THIS POSSIBLE. CONVERS ALLEGED THAT MANY HOSPITALS WERE UNABLE GREAT CASUALTIES PROPERLY FOR WANT OF

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ADEQUATE MEDICAMENTS WHICH ICRC HAD HOPED TO STOCKPILE

PRIOR TO SERIOUS WIDESPREAD FIGHTING. HE CITED, FOR INSTANCE, OPERATIONS, INCLUDING AMPUTATIONS, BEING CONDUCTED UNDER BATTLEFIELD CONDITIONS WITHOUT ANESTHESIA IN CERTAIN HOSPITALS. HE SAID ICRC OPERATING UNDER SEVERE FINANCIAL RESTRICTIONS AND, UNCERTAIN OF FUNDING FROM GOVERNMENTS, IS DOING ONLY WHAT IT CAN DO WITH SUMS AS THEY ARE PLACED AT ITS DISPOSITION. THUS, THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEND TWO PLANES WITHIN PAST THREE WEEKS WITH MEDICATIONS, BLOOD SUBSTITUTES, ANTIBIOTICS, DRESSINGS, AND ANESTHESIA.

3. CONVERS NOTED THAT WHILE SOME ASSISTANCE IS BEING PROVIDED BY NATIONAL SOCIETIES, ICRC CAN REACT MORE SWIFTLY, SINCE IS AUTHORIZED TO PURCHASE HOSPITAL SUPPLIES AS NEEDED DIRECTLY FROM SWISS ARMY STOCKS HERE. ITS PRESENT FINANCIAL SITUATION IS SERIOUS, HOWEVER WITH A THREE MILLION SWISS FRANC DEFICIT IN ITS REGULAR BUDGET THIS YEAR, PARTIALLY DUE TO NON-REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS.

4. A MAJOR ICRC CONCERN, ACCORDING TO CONVERS WAS THE OVER-CROWDING OF CERTAIN HOSPITALS IN THE BEIRUT AREA, WHICH ICRC SOUGHT TO ALLEVIATE THROUGH APPEALS TO JORDAN AND EGYPT. JORDAN OFFERED 150 BEDS BUT, ACCORDING TO CONVERS, PALESTINIAN WOUNDED REFUSED TO TRANSFER TO JORDANIAN HOSPITALS. FURTHERMORE, MOSLEM WOUNDED IN OVER-CROWDED HOSPITALS IN AND AROUND BEIRUT SIMILARLY REFUSED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO EMPTY BEDS IN CHRISTIAN HOSPITALS. TO MEET THIS SITUATION, ICRC HAS OPENED, AS REPORTED REF (B) A 150 BED HOSPITAL IN SOUTHERN BEIRUT, AT INTERSECTION OF NEW DAMASCUS AND SAIDA ROADS. THIS HE ALSO DESCRIBED AS DISTRICT UNDER CONTROL OF MOSLEM SHIITES DISPLACED FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON, WHO NUMBER APPROXIMATELY 150,000 AND ARE "THE POOREST OF THE POOR". HOSPITAL IS STAFFED BY TEN SPECIALIST EUROPEAN DOCTORS AND NURSES FUNDED BY SCANDINAVIAN RED CROSS SOCIETIES, PLUS ANOTHER SIX LEBANESE DOCTORS AND THIRTY NURSES. BUILDING ITSELF IS ONE DONATED BY SCANDINAVIANS FOR USE IN MIDDLE EAST IN 1970. DESPITE THESE CONTRIBUTIONS, CONVERS STATED, ICRC IS PRESSED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIND FUNDS FOR RELATED NECESSARY EXPENSES, SUCH AS MEDICAMENTS, FOOD AND SALARIES OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES, WHICH HE PLACED AT ABOUT 400,000 SF PER MONTH (SEE BELOW).

5. CONCERNING DISPLACED PERSONS (DP'S), CONVERS SAID THERE ARE TWO MAJOR CATEGORIES OTHER THAN THE SHIITES WHO FLED THE FIGHTING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, MENTIONED ABOVE. THERE ARE THOSE WHO LOST HOMES AND

POSSESSIONS IN BEIRUT AND ENVIRONS, WHO NUMBER APPROXIMATELY 10,000, AND THOSE WHO FLED PRINCIPALLY TO SYRIA, BUT ALSO TO JORDAN AND EGYPT AND WHO ARE NOW FILTERING BACK TO FIND THEIR HOMES LOOTED AND/OR DESTROYED, AND WHOSE NUMBER ARE UNCERTAIN. CONVERS PLACED THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DP'S AT ROUGHLY 200,000.

6. HE DESCRIBED ICRC'S EFFORTS TO MEET MOST DP'S URGENT NEEDS, SUCH AS SHIPMENT OF 10,000 BLANKETS, WHICH HE TERMED TOTALLY INADEQUATE. OTHERWISE ICRC DEPENDENT ON NATIONAL SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH TO DATE HAVE CONSISTED OF 20,000 PIECES OF CLOTHING FROM GERMAN RED CROSS, FIVE TONS OF CONCENTRATED BABY FOOD FROM NETHERLANDS RED CROSS, FIVE TONS OF POWDERED MILK FROM SWISS GOVERNMENT, 25 TONS FROM COMMON MARKET AND 80 TONS FROM LUXEMBOURG, FOR A TOTAL OF 110 TONS OF POWDERED MILK. (IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION REF (A) AND CONFIRMING REF (B), CONVERS SAID IN VIEW OF FOREGOING CONTRIBUTIONS, NO MORE POWDERED MILK NEEDED AT MOMENT.)

7. CONVERS REPORTED, AS MARTI HAD TO LAMBRAKIS, THAT ICRC HAD RECEIVED REQUEST FROM LEBANESE FOR MOBILE MEDICAL TEAMS, ONE IN NORTH AND ONE IN SOUTH, WHICH THEY ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE WHEN THEY HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDS. HOWEVER, HE SEEMED PESSIMISTIC THEY WOULD BE AVAILABLE AND EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET THIS REQUEST. HE MENTIONED THEIR PLEAS TO ARAB COUNTRIES FOR ASSISTANCE BUT OBSERVED THAT THESE HAD GENERATED SMALL RETURNS THUS FAR, SINCE ARABS APPEAR TO PREFER MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS IN BILATERAL, RATHER THAN MULTILATERAL CONTEXT, PROBABLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, CONVERS MENTIONED MARTI'S PITCH TO MAHMOUD RIAH FOR ARAB LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEAGUE ASSISTANCE, AND SAID THAT A MEETING OF ARAB MINISTERS OF HEALTH HAD BEEN SET FOR FEBRUARY 22 IN AMMAN TO CONSIDER APPEAL. CONVERS REPEATED THAT IF CONTRIBUTIONS WERE NOT SOON FORTHCOMING, ICRC WOULD BE FORCED TO HALT AT LEAST A MAJOR PART OF THEIR RELIEF WORK AND POSSIBLY SOME OF THEIR MEDICAL ACTIVITY.

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ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EUR-12 AID-05 FDRE-00 /059 W

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8. ON DISTRIBUTION, CONVERS SAID THAT ALL BLANKETS AND BABY FOOD HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISTRIBUTED THROUGH TWO SEPARATE POINTS, ONE FOR CHRISTIANS AND ONE FOR MOSLEMS, THAT SOME CONTRIBUTIONS HAD BEEN EFFECTED THROUGH THE LEBANESE RED CROSS AND PALESTINIAN RED CRESCENT, THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, AND VARIOUS PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS. BLANKETS WERE DISTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE DISPLACED PERSONS WITHIN THEIR CAMPS.

9. CONTRIBUTIONS. IN ADDITION TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DOCTORS, NURSES, AND HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT MADE BY THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES, AND THOSE OF BABY FOOD AND POWDERED MILK MENTIONED ABOVE, CONVERS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING LIST OF DONATIONS FROM GOVERNMENTS (IN THOUSANDS OF SWISS FRANCS): FRG 50.9, AUSTRIA 141.5, CANADA 193.0, NETHERLANDS 265.0, NEW ZEALAND 4.0, SWITZERLAND 100.0, DENMARK 84.5, FOR A TOTAL OF 838.9. FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES, AUSTRALIA 3.3, BELGIUM 19.3, CANDAA 19.5, FRANCE 8.7, GREECE 5.0, IRELAND 15.9, LICHTENSTEIN 1.0, LUMEMBOURG 4.0, MONACO 2.95, SWEDEN 177.6, SWITZERLAND 25.0, AND JERUSALEM 5.9, FOR A TOTAL OF 288.2. ADDITIONAL PLEDGES FROM GOVERNMENTS (NETHERLANDS) AND NATIONAL SOCIETIES (GAZA, CANADA AND AUSTRALIA) TOTAL 284.05, FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF 1,407.38. TOGETHER WITH CONTRIBUTIONS

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IN KIND, HE ESTIMATES VALUE OF TOTAL RESPONSE AT PRESENT AT 2.45 MILLION SWISS FRANCS OR SLIGHTLY LESS THAN ONE

MILLION DOLLARS.

10. CONVERS STATED FINALLY THAT ICRC'S GREATEST NEED NOW IS FOR CASH TO RECOUP THEIR DEFICIT AND PROCEED WITH PLANNED ACTIVITIES, AND FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND, PRINCIPALLY BLANKETS, CERTAIN MEDICAMENTS AND CLOTHING. HE ADDED THAT MAJOR PROBLEMS NOW ARE WITHIN MOSLEM DISTRICTS SINCE CONDITIONS IN CHRISTIAN AREAS ARE NOT AS ACUTE.

11. SUBSEQUENT TO ABOVE CONVERSATION, CONVERS SUPPLIED MISSION WITH FOLLOWING ESTIMATED AND ACTUAL COST BREAKDOWN FOR ICRC'S LEBANESE OPERATION:

1. FIELD HOSPITAL, MONTHLY BUDGET AS FOLLOWS:

A. EUROPEAN DOCTORS AND NURSES PAID BY DANISH, NORWEGIAN AND FINNISH RED CROSS SOCIETIES. ICRC RESPONSIBLE FOR TEAM'S EXPENSES IN COUNTRY, HOUSING AND PER DIEM: 30,000 SFR PER MONTH.

B. OTHER HOSPITAL EXPENSES : (1) PERSONNEL RECRUITED IN LEBANON: SIX DOCTORS, THIRTY NURSES, NINE STUDENT NURSES, SIX TECHNICIANS, THREE ACCOUNTANTS, SIX INTERPRETERS, THREE GENERAL HELP, THREE COOKS AND SIX ASSISTANTS, THREE CLEANING FORCE AND SIX ASSISTANT: TOTAL 75,000 LEBANESE POUNDS; (2) FOOD, TEN LEBANESE POUNDS PER PATIENT PER DAY, 45,000 LEBANESE POUNDS; (3) LAUNDRY, 34,500 LEBANESE POUNDS; (4) ELECTRICITY, SIX GENERATORS, 15,000 LEBANESE POUNDS; (5) LABORATORY AND X-RAY, 27,000 POUNDS; (6) MEDICINES AND MEDICAL MATERIAL, 135,000 LEBANESE POUNDS. SUB-TOTAL B - 331,500 LEBANESE POUNDS, OR APPROXIMATELY 350,000 SWISS FRANCS. WATER AND GUARDS SALARIES TO BE PAID BY SHIITE COMMUNITY. TOTAL MONTHLY BUDGET, A AND B, FOR ICRC ACCOUNT - 380,000 SWISS FRANCS.

II. VALUE OF MEDICINES, MEDICAL MATERIAL, FOODSTUFFS AND VARIOUS EQUIPMENT SENT TO DATE 2.5 MILLION SWISS FRANCS, WITH ADDITIONAL TO BE PROVIDED AS CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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III. FIXED PROBABLE MONTHLY COSTS:

A OPERATIONAL COSTS: 100,000 SWISS FRANCS

B FIELD HOSPITAL: 380,000 SWISS FRANCS

C MEDICAL TEAMS IN NORTH, SOUTH AND BEKAA: 150,000 SWISS FRANCS.

D OTHER ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED ACCORDING TO CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED (BLANKETS VERY NECESSARY).

12. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS PUT IN SIEVERTS-BRENNAN TELECON,
CONVERS STATED BABY FOOD NEEDED, AND WILL SUPPLY QUANTITIES
ASAP; ESTIMATED TIME AND NUMBERS OF REFUGEE CARE THAT
COULD BE PROVIDED WITH FULL \$2 MILLION ALSO FORTHCOMING SOON.
IN LATTER REGARD, HE POINTED OUT SHORTFALL IN APPEAL,
AND FACT THAT CONSIDERABLE SUM ALREADY EXPENDED FROM ICRC FUNDS
WHICH IT HOPES REPLENISH AGAINST FUTURE OPERATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RELIEF, EMERGENCY PLANNING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GENEVA01033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760053-1154
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760256/aaaabxan.tel
Line Count: 286
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ORM
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 28786, 76 BEIRUT 1242
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAY 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <01 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ICRC APPEAL FOR US ASSISTANCE IN LEBANON
TAGS: SREF, EAID, LE, US, ICRC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006